

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 EB-08 AID-05 TRSE-00 AGR-01

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-----022943 100658Z /12

R 091240Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8114

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KHARTOUM 3659

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, SU

SUBJ: SECURITY OF NIMEIRI GOVERNMENT

SUMMARY: PRIMARY GOAL OF NIMEIRI REGIME IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUT FIRST ESSENTIAL CONDITION IS NATURALLY SECURITY OF HIS GOVERNMENT. NIMEIRI HIMSELF DISCUSSED THREAT FROM COMMUNISTS RECENTLY BUT DESPITE VIVID LANGUAGE HIS PURPOSE MAY HAVE BEEN TO DISTRACT SUDANESE PUBLIC FROM SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE SCARCITIES, HIGH PRICES AND
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BREAKDOWN OF PUBLIC SERVICES WHICH ALMOST BROUGHT KHARTOUM TO HALT RECENTLY CONSTITUTE MOST IMMEDIATE DANGER TO STABILITY OF REGIME. HOWEVER, MILITARY SUPPORT REMAINS FIRM, THANKS TO NIMEIRI'S CONSTANT AND PRUDENT ATTENTION. POLITICAL OPPOSITION HAS BEEN FRAGMENTED BY RECONCILIATION EXCEPT FOR MALEVOLENT BUT IMPOTENT COMMUNIST PARTY. FLOOD DISASTER PROCLAIMED BY NIMEIRI PROVIDED OPPORTUNITY TO

SHIFT BLAME FOR ECONOMIC WOES, TO SOLICIT FOREIGN AID TO RECOUP BAD START ON COTTON CROP, AND TO CONCEAL RELIEF OPERATION FOR SOUTHERN REGION. SOUTHERN SUDAN IS IN THROES OF ANNUAL FOOD SHORTAGES EXACERBATED BY ISOLATION AND TRANSPORT FAILURES, BUT SITUATION PRESENTS NO SECURITY THREAT TO NIMEIRI WHO DISCREETLY IS AIDING SOUTHERN LEADERS. IN SUM, NIMEIRI APPARENTLY FEELS SECURE ENOUGH TO RAISE SPECTER OF POSSIBLE COUP TO DISTRACT PUBLIC FROM OTHER TROUBLES. EMD SUMMARY

1. PRIMARY GOAL OF NIMEIRI'S GOVERNMENT IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF SUDAN. ALTHOUGH HIS PROFESSIONAL SECURITY FORCES SOMETIMES APPEAR ALMOST COMPLACENT, NIMEIRI RECOGNIZES AND OCCASIONALLY REMARKS THAT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REQUIRES, FIRST AND FOREMOST, SECURITY OF HIS REGIME. IN ANY COUNTRY WITHOUT TESTED MEANS OF ORDERLY SUCCESSION, CONSIDERATIONS OF SECURITY MUST BE CONSTANTLY REVIEWED. FOLLOWING OAU CONFERENCE IN KHARTOUM IN JULY AND HIS ARAB LEAGUE TRAVELS IN JUNE, NIMEIRI TURNED HIS ATTENTION TO SUDAN'S DOMESTIC PROBLEMS AND, NATURALLY, TO SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS. SET OUT BELOW IS OUR CONSIDERED ANALYSIS OF NIMEIRI'S POSITION PRESENTLY IN LIGHT LIMITED HARD INFO AVAILABLE TO US.

2. IN HIS MONTHLY TELEVISION SPEECH QUOTE FACE THE NATION UNQUOTE JULY 30 (KHARTOUM 3509) NIMEIRI DWELT AT
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LENGTH ON SECURITY THREAT TO HIS REGIME POSED BY INTERNAL AND EXGERNAL COMMUNISTS. HE RECALLED 1971 COUP ATTEMPT BY COMMUNISTS AND STRESSED FOR HIS AUDIENCE THAT COMMUNISTS HOPE TO TOPPLE HIM "BEFORE JULY 1978, DURING JULY 1978 AND AFTER JULY 1978." HIS VIVID LANGUAGE CONVINCED MANY LISTENERS THAT COUP PLOTS HAD BEEN FOILED BY SECURITY FORCES DURING OAU CONFERENCE OR DURING NIMEIRI'S TRAVELS IN ARAB CAPITALS IN JUNE, ALTHOUGH LITTLE EVIDENCE OF GRAVE DANGER WAS NOTED BY EMBASSY. NIMEIRI PROBABLY WAS EXPLOITING SECURITY FEARS TO DISTRACT SUDANESE PUBLIC FROM OTHER TROUBLES. HIS TOPIC WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF CITIZENRY.

3. MOST OBSERVERS CITE GROWING DISAFFECTION AND HARDSHIPS OF GENERAL PUBLIC AS PRINCIPAL THREAT TO REGIME RIGHT NOW. KHARTOUM CITIZENS HAVE IN PAST TAKEN TO STREETS AND PRECIPITATED POLITICAL CHANGE WHEN THEIR PATIENCE WAS PUSHED TOO FAR. DIPLOMATS AND SUDANESE MARVEL NOW AT TOLERANCE WITH WHICH CITIZENS ACCEPT GASOLINE SHORTAGE WHICH REACHED CRISIS PROPORTIONS IN LATE JULY AND EARLY AUGUST, HIGH PRICES OF BLACK MARKET FOOD AND SCARCITY OF SUGAR, MILK, FLOUR, AND MEAT. MEDIA ANNOUNCED RECENTLY THAT 97,000 TONS OF SUGAR

WERE AT PORT SUDAN AND 60,000 MORE TONS WERE EN ROUTE,
AND THAT MEAT PRICES WERE REDUCED SLIGHTLY. SUCH
PROMISES ARE APPEARING FREQUENTLY IN PRESS AND CARRY THEIR
OWN DANGERS IF COMMODITIES DO NOT BECOME MORE PLentiful
IN KHARTOUM SOON. IN ADDITION, WATER PRESSURE IS LOW OR
INTERMITTENT IN MANY PARTS OF KHARTOUM AND ELECTRICITY
FAILURES AFFECT MUCH OF THE CITY DAILY. SITUATION IN
PROVINCES IS WORSE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KHARTOUM 3659

4. PUBLIC EVENTS HAD TO BE CANCELED LAST WEEK BECAUSE
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS LACKED GASOLINE; MANY PEOPLE
MISSED WORK OR HAD TO WALK LONG DISTANCES. NIMEIRI BLAMED
PUBLIC FOR BLACK MARKETING AND INDIVIDUAL MINISTERS FOR
ERRORS IN HIS MONTHLY SPEECH AND MADE KEY CHANGES IN CABINET
POSITIONS (TRANSPORT, ENERGY) TO STOP DETERIORATION. THESE
PALLIATIVES MAY NOT AFFECT SUCH UNDERLYING CAUSES AS INFLATION

AND PRIMITIVE INFRASTRUCTURE, BUT THEY BUY TIME FOR BETTER SOLUTIONS.

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5. DANGER OF CIVILIAN UNREST IS THAT MILITARY FORCES MAY BECOME INVOLVED. NIMEIRI'S POWER BASE STILL RESTS MAINLY ON MILITARY AND TECHNOCRATS OF GOVERNMENT. SUDANESE ARMY LIVES AMONG CIVIL POPULATION AND SHARES TROUBLES, BUT NIMEIRI HAS BEEN CAREFUL TO ENSURE THAT SOLDIERS ARE WELL PAID, HAVE TRANSPORT AND OTHER AMENITIES, AND ENJOY HIGH MORALE. HIS RECENT ROUND OF PROMOTIONS FOR SENIOR OFFICERS WILL PROBABLY START CASCADE OF PROMOTIONS FOR ALL RANKS, FURTHER IMPROVING SECURITY. APPARENT LOYALTY OF MILITARY FORCES IS MAJOR REASON FOR NOT RPT NOT WORRYING ABOUT UNHAPPINESS OF CIVILIANS. OTHER REASON, OF COURSE, IS LACK OF IDENTIFIED ORGANIZED OPPOSITION GROUP OF ANY SIZE.

6. RECENT FLOOD DISASTER IN PARTS OF NORTHERN SUDAN PROVIDED NIMEIRI WITH LUCKY OPPORTUNITY TO SEEK FOREIGN AID WITHOUT ADMITTING RESPONSIBILITY FOR ECONOMY PROBLEMS, ESPECIALLY COTTON CROP WHICH ALLEGEDLY LACKED HERBICIDES BECAUSE SUDAN DID NOT HAVE FOREIGN EXCHANGE TO BUY ENOUGH, AND SIMILARLY HAD NOT BEEN PROPERLY FERTILIZED BEFORE RAINS FLOODED FIELDS. UNDER COVER OF DISASTER, SUDANGOV MAY BE ATTEMPTING TO RECOUP BAD START ON PRINCIPAL MONEY CROP. OTHER DESIRABLE SIDE EFFECTS OF EMERGENCY INCLUDE PARTIAL EXCUSE FOR CONSUMER SHORTAGES, IN PARTICULAR SCARCITIES WHICH CAN BE BLAMED ON RAILROAD WASHOUTS. NIMEIRI MAY ALSO BE OPERATING LARGE SCALE RELIEF OPERATION TO SOUTHERN SUDAN WITHOUT PUBLICITY UNDER GUISE OF DISASTER OPERATIONS, ALTHOUGH SOUTHERN FOOD SHORTAGE IS NEITHER NEW NOR UNUSUAL.

7. SOUTHERN SUDANESE POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE BEEN QUIET PUBLICLY ABOUT LACK OF FOOD, FUEL AND PUBLIC SERVICES THROUGHOUT SOUTH SINCE EARLY JULY, WHEN REGIONAL MINISTER MADE CRITICAL
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REMARKS ON JUBA RADIO. IN ADDITION TO SAME ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WHICH PLAGUE KHARTOUM, SOUTH ALSO EXPERIENCED PARTIAL FAILURE OF LAST YEAR'S CROPS AND SEVERE RAIN DAMAGE TO ROADS. NEITHER RAILWAYS NOR AIRLINE MAKES SCHEDULED RUNS TO SOUTHERN REGION NOW AND ISOLATION OF SOUTH IS ALMOST COMPLETE. SUDAN AIR FORCE BEGAN FLYING RELIEF

FOOD TO JUBA AND WAU SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE DECLARATION OF FLOOD DISASTER AND HAS SINCE MAINTAINED SOUTHERN RELIEF OPERATION WITHOUT ANY PUBLICITY IN KHARTOUM AT ALL, DESPITE EXTENSIVE PUBLICITY GIVEN TO ALL RELIEF ACTIVITIES ELSEWHERE.

8. ON AUGUST 8 AIR FORCE FLEW 50 SOUTHERN SUDANESE STUDENTS TO JUBA BECAUSE COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS WERE CANCELLED. THE STUDENTS, RETURNING FROM EGYPT, HAD BEEN STRANDED IN KHARTOUM FOR SEVERAL WEEKS. NIMEIRI AND SOUTHERN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP HAVE APPARENTLY AGREED TO COOPERATE VERY QUIETLY TO RELIEVE HARDSHIPS TO AVOID BOTH NORTHERN ENVY AND FURTHER SOUTHERN DISCONTENT. ALTHOUGH SOUTH REMAINS COMPLEX POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEM, NIMEIRI'S SECURITY IS NOT DIRECTLY THREATENED.

9. IN SUM, NIMEIRI'S INTERNAL SECURITY PROBLEMS CAN BE SEEN AS BASED MOSTLY ON WOEFUL ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES PREVAILING IN COUNTRY. ECONOMIC SITUATION PROVIDES TRADITIONAL MATRIX OF DISCONTENT FOR WOULD-BE PLOTTERS. BUT ORGANIZED POLITICAL OPPOSITION HAS NOT RECOVERED FROM FRAGMENTATION CAUSED BY RECONCILIATION. KEY MILITARY SUPPORT APPEARS SAFE. REGIONAL RIVALRIES WHICH COULD PROVIDE SPARK ARE HELD IN CHECK BY NIMEIRI'S DISCREET ASSISTANCE TO SOUTH. COMMUNISTS ARE TOO FEW TO CONSTITUTE IMMEDIATE THREAT ALTHOUGH NIMEIRI IS CORRECT IN POINTING OUT THEIR DESIRE TO TOPPLE HIM. NIMEIRI APPARENTLY FEELS SO SECURE THAT HE CAN RAISE THE SPECTER OF COUP PLOTS TO DISTRACT PUBLIC ATTENTION FROM OTHER TROUBLES. HOWEVER, SUCCESSFUL COUPS ARE USUALLY COMPLETE SURPRISES FROM UNEXPECTED QUARTERS. THIS LARGELY ILLITERATE, RELIGIOUSLY CONTENTIOUS
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POPULATION MAY CONTAIN SMALL NUMBER OF DESPERADOES WHO COULD ACT WITHOUT LOGIC OR WARMING.
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